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Research Paper

Mental health and resilience among transgender: a review

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ABSTRACT

Sex and gender are two different continuums where sex is all about biological structure and function, while gender can refer to a social role of a male or female. In the same society there are a third gender who see themselves as a different gender regardless the sex they are assigned at birth. Transgender is all about gender identity. Since they are out of the social acceptance, so they are discriminated in society and other places which make them feel they are no one and nowhere. These feelings of dissatisfaction with their gender identity, no recognition in society and discrimination lead them to serious emotional distress. Despite of all many transgender people overcome these distresses by adopting the positive coping strategies. In this review paper, I will shed the light on the mental health issues are facing by transgender people and their resilience to cope with their issues.

Keywords: *Transgender, Mental Health, Resilience*

People whose gender identity or expression does not match the sex they were assigned at birth called 'transgender' (W.H.O). For instance, a transgender person may identify as a man despite having been born with female genitalia. Gender identity is a person's internal sense of being male or female or something else. Transgender people are included under LGBTQ, which refers to the community of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer or questioning individuals. It's important to understand the difference between sex and gender, sex is based on biology- chromosomes, anatomy, and hormones; but a person's gender identity- the inner sense of being female, male, or both, (Lisa Fields, 2011). So, the transgender people have the inner sense of being male or female regardless their sex assignment at birth. The term transgender was coined by psychiatrist John F. Oliven in 1965 reference work Sexual Hygiene and pathology. Transgender people were categorised in ICD 10 and DSM 4 as "gender identity disorder" which is now replaced by more neutral word "gender dysphoria". Gender dysphoria is defined for those transgender people who are distressed about knowing the difference between the gender they are thought to be and the gender they know themselves to be, which can lead them to serious emotional distress that effects their health and everyday life if it is not addressed.

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Many transgender people go for transition when they are not satisfied with their assigned sex and their gender identity. For transition they opt for either surgery or hormones replacement therapy. "Gender reassignment surgery" is also called gender affirmation surgery by both medical professionals and transgender individuals usually references transgender genital surgery, (Dr. Joshua Safer, 2017). Genital surgery usually does on transgender individual who is above 18 and who has been treated with hormones. Transgender people for surgery are reviewed by a medical team that considers mental health and physical health in determining the best treatment strategy, possibly including surgery, for each individual.

Almost 700,000 adults in the united states identify as transgender, (William institute at the university of California, Los Angeles, 2011). In India transgender people are called Hijra, chhakka, kinner. In India significant population of transgender is 490,000, (2011). They are officially recognized as third gender, being neither completely male nor female. Before 2014 transgender people had no recognition in official fields and society. Finally, they got recognition in April, 2014 as third gender, in law. Since only male or female are recognised by the society, so transgender people have always faced many difficulties in society, at work place. This gender ultimately included in minority group. Some are rejected by family, some are teased by people, some faces harassment, that lead them to feel inferior in society and they feel themselves as an alien among other people. Now there are many communities of transgender people can be seen in different cities, where they are demanding for the equal rights as others have in the society and in other places. It was difficult for them to getting job, going to the market, sitting in public places, getting passport, admission in schools or colleges, that made them feeling out of space and frustrated. They were not legally protected from discrimination. In India, 2016, the transgender persons (protection of rights) bill has been passed. This bill has provided transgender people many rights in the society:

1. Now they can hold certificate of identity as a proof of recognition which will be granted by the district magistrate.
2. The bill prohibits discrimination against a transgender person in areas such as education, employment, and healthcare.
3. Offences like compelling a transgender person to beg, denial of access to a public place, physical and sexual abuse, etc. would attract up to two years' imprisonment and a fine.
4. The bill defines a transgender person as one who is 1) neither wholly female nor male; or 2) a combination of female and male; 3) neither male nor female. Additionally, the person's gender identity should not match the gender assigned at birth.

Despite of all the rights and recognition in society still they are facing problems which are leading them to mental health issues. On other hand there are some studies have demonstrated that in spite of many hardships in their day-to-day life transgender people have overcome from hardships by adopting positive coping strategies.

Mental Health among Transgender

Being a minority group in society transgender people face a lot of issues in different areas in society that lead them to mental health issues. There are several studies have been done on transgender people and found they face anxiety, depression and other mental health issues. A research on mental health among transgender stated that the prevalence of psychiatric disorders among transgender people have identified elevated rates of psychopathology. The research identifies 38 cross-sectional and longitudinal studies describing that the levels of psychopathology and psychiatric disorders in transgender people attending attendance

services are higher than in the cis population. Depression and anxiety are found on the main axis1. Schizophrenia and bipolar disorder are rare in other psychiatric disorder. Evidence regarding gender differences conflict: studies found higher psychopathology in transgender women, while other studies found there is no differences between gender groups. Overall, this research paper shows that transgender people attending transgender health care services apparently have higher risk of psychiatric comorbidity, and therefore confirms that this population is vulnerable to the mental health issues, (Dhejne C, et al., 2016).

One study by Tamar C. Carmel and Laura Erickson-Schroth in 2016 has shown that disproportionate rates of discrimination, harassment, sexual assault and violence experienced by transgender people and gender non conformity group have negative mental health outcome, was explained by Minority Stress Model. Additionally, research demonstrated an increased risk of substance abuse, self-injury, depression, and suicidal attempts in transgender people. Account to posttraumatic stress disorder, anxiety disorder, bipolar disorder, psychotic disorder, eating disorder, body dysmorphic disorder, and autism spectrum disorder are less conclusively in studies.

There has been a big increment in research examining the health disparities among sexual and gender minorities. Sara B. Oswalt and Alyssa M. Lederer, 2017, have found in their research work that transgender students have approximately twice the risk for most mental health conditions compared to the female students who are cisgender. Schizophrenia is a notable exception, where transgender students have seven times the risk when compared to cisgender. Regression analyses and significant findings have shown that being a non-heterosexual is a big predictor for concern of mental health. Anxiety (11.6% reported the condition overall, with 33.4% of transgender-identified reported the condition), depression (10.4% overall, 34.3% transgender-identified students), panic attack (5.3% overall, 16.5% transgender-identified students) are the three high frequencies of mental health concerns.

Resilience among transgender

Though transgender people face discrimination and violence in society because of their gender identity, still many of them successfully hold positivity and find a good life in society. Many studies have shown that transgender people have strong resilience that make them to adopt a positivity about life, about themselves in society despite of all disparities. Arnold H. Grossman, 2011 has shown in his study that almost 55 transgender youth described their gender development and stressful life experiences was described by some related to their gender expression and identity of gender. Past verbal abuse by peer group, family members related to gender identity and nonconformity by almost two thirds of transgender youth and past physical abuse reported by one-third to one-fifth transgender youth. In his study he examined four aspects of psychological resilience: self-esteem, perceived social support, emotion-oriented coping and a sense of self mastery. Through regression model of the four aspects he has accounted for 40%-50% of the variance in relation to trauma, depression, mental health symptoms, and problems related to internalizing and externalizing. A significant predictor of negative mental health was emotion-oriented coping which was determined by every mental health variables.

One research has been done in Indian perspective where researcher has demonstrated resilience among transgender. Transgender people are exploited, ridiculed, and discriminated in society; they are rejected by their families and communities because of their gender role and gender expression. Mental health problems and psychological distress are common among this population. Through consecutive sampling method sixty transgender

people were recruited by researcher for this study. For the purpose of study Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale was used. Researcher found that respondents scored low (59.30+_ 15.02912) in the resilience scale, and this score was lower across the world in comparison to the other population. This score showed the poor resilience status among the respondents. On other hand, it was found that residing at family, having education and being employed, are the factors which are helpful in better resilience among transgender population (Mr. Hasiruvalli Gangappa Virupaksha, 2018).

There are several empirical studies have shown resilience among this population. Aramburu Alegria, 2018 stated that characteristics of families which is supportive in nature, related to transgender youth's well-being. In one longitudinal study he interviewed 14 parents of 12 transgender youth aged till 17; she discovered that among socially transitioned youth, parents are giving independence and facilitated selective disclosure of trans identities. Supportive networks like counsellors, were leveraged to giving camaraderie and promoting resilience among the youth transgender was established. Still she heard about struggle parents endured- notably dealing with child's safety, future in uncertainty surroundings. Finally concluded when parents are supportive at every step to socially transition, transgender youth was found more engaged and happier. Klein & Golub,2016; Watson et al., 2017 have previously found the same result where parents and family to be more important in the well-being of transgender youth. So, these studies corroborate each other's results.

Researchers have examined discrimination and resilience among transgender and potential responses of health services. Out of 1478 papers 19 papers were reviewed through following the rigorous inclusion and exclusion criteria. Findings yielded that there is a need to ensure transgender's needs should be represented and fully integrated because there are clear outcomes that improve their quality of life and health. Though discrimination make them experience poorer health, still many transgender people are capable of developing positive coping strategies and resilience (Edward McCann & Michael Brown, 2016).

METHODOLOGY

Aim

- The present paper aims to explore the mental health and resilience among transgender.

Objectives

- The current study focuses on the relevant literature and empirical studies to find out the mental health and resilience among transgender.

RESULT

Result found that transgender face mental health issues due to discrimination against them at places. Since they come under minority group and facing a lot of issues in their lives that make them to be at risk twice than the other gender groups. There are many studies which show the same result of facing mental health issues by transgender. It was found less resilience among transgender which lead them to mental health issues.

DISCUSSION

Transgender individuals are those who have different gender expression from their sex assigned at birth. A person can be a male by birth but his expression of gender is a female that is transgender woman. A person can be a female by birth but her expression of the gender is a male that is transgender man. They are different from those other genders that's

why they are counted in minority group. Most of the transgender people face many issues throughout their childhood, some of them are abandoned by their families so they go to join the community of the same people. They were almost non-visible to the society at a time but after 2014 they got their place in the society. Despite of, getting a recognition in the society they face the discrimination against them by the people in the society. They feel themselves cut out of the society that make them more vulnerable to have mental health issues. Because of discrimination and emotional issues transgender people are low on the resilience that also make them prone to mental disorders. There are many studies have been done to see the mental health and resilience among transgender. Indian perspective where researcher has demonstrated resilience among transgender. Transgender people are exploited, ridiculed, and discriminated in society; they are rejected by their families and communities because of their gender role and gender expression. Mental health problems and psychological distress are common among this population (Mr. Hasiruvalli Gangappa Virupaksha, 2018).

Researchers have examined discrimination and resilience among transgender and potential responses of health services. Findings yielded that there is a need to ensure transgender's needs should be represented and fully integrated because there are clear outcomes that improve their quality of life and health. Though discrimination make them experience poorer health, still many transgender people are capable of developing positive coping strategies and resilience (Edward McCann & Michael Brown, 2016). So, there studies also corroborate that transgender people face mental health issues, there are less resilience among transgender that make their lives more difficult.

Interventions

Though it has been described in the law for transgender people of getting health services, but still there are many health professionals who are not ready to deal with this population. So, it is important to strengthen the health sector, by providing every health care professionals with training how to treat and care for this population who are suffering from mental health issues due to discrimination. Through intervention they can be helped with developing positive coping strategies and resilience.

Research Implication

Researchers can invest in research that can provide a solid evidence of adverse mental health among transgenders due to discrimination within society. Research can be done on adult transgender's mental health, since there are many studies have shown mental health among young transgender population. There should be more studies on resilience factors among adult as well as young transgender population.

CONCLUSION

Therefore, there are several studies have been done with this population, their problems, discrimination, mental health issues, quality of life and ultimately their positive coping strategies and resilience. Transgender population is also a gender which get a recognition in society but due to their gender role according to their sex at birth and their inner sense of gender identity does not match according to the socially accepted roles, they face a lot of troubles. In many places they experience they are from outer space, they get exploited, sometimes rejected by their families, physically abused, verbally abused by people. That tremendously effect their mental health because they do not feel safe, they feel cut out of the society which lead them to loneliness and eventually mental health issues. Transgender is all about gender identity and gender identity is inner sense of how a person see himself or herself and how does he or she expresses herself or himself. Studies have shown that social

acceptance, support from families make transgender population develop resilience and positive coping strategies with their gender identity. Still there is a need of a good number of studies that shed the light on mental health issues among transgender people and resilience.

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Conflict of Interest
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